

## **FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**December 10, 2014**

**8:00PM**

### **CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE**

Council President Lovenduski called the meeting to order and led the Salute to the Flag.

### **SUNSHINE STATEMENT**

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was sent to the Register News for information; posted on the municipal bulletin board; placed on the web-site on January 9, 2014; and advertised in the Burlington Co. Times on January 12, 2014.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Paul Ostrander, Jerry Sandusky, David Woolston, Ted Lovenduski

Also present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Administrator; Kelly Grant, Esq., Township Solicitor; James Biegen, Township Engineer; Russell Trice, Township Water & Sewer Engineer; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk

(Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator, was absent because he was representing Florence Township at a meeting in Pennsylvania)

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Council President Lovenduski opened the meeting to the public.

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the MOTION of Ostrander; seconded by Sandusky, to close the public comments. Roll call vote – all ayes.

### **BUSINESS**

#### **Township Water and Sewer Engineer**

##### **Sewer Extension Request – Mansfield Township**

Mayor Wilkie said he met with the property owner who is requesting the township provide sewer to his property located on the other side of the 295 interchange. The township looked at its capacity. The biggest concerns were the potential of the former steel plant and other large projects. The town has concerns about the intersections of Route 130 and Florence-Columbus Road and Route 130 and Cedar Lane. Because of the heavy volume at these intersections, further development is not encouraged. He also told the developer about the commercial growth going on in Florence. Encouraging development in Mansfield would impact Florence Township. There is no sewer out there. The barrier is the northeast extension of the Turnpike and it has been since 1988. There was a lawsuit that Florence won in 1989 when they said they were not going to add massive amounts of housing. The community is not comfortable putting itself in the position of putting sewer lines there and creating a potential for residential development. In that zone, the lots need to be three acres for a residence.

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It also comes down to feasibility because the septic would need many accommodations to be run in that area, especially in the high clay areas. The country area soil has a very high clay content. For the protection of the community, he told the developer sewer would not run to that area. Perhaps at a later date, but the intersections need to be addressed. The developer said he understood all of the reasoning. Mayor Wilkie said Administrator Brook did request that formal action be taken on the fact that the township is not interested in expanding water and sewer into Mansfield at this time.

It was the **MOTION** of Sandusky; seconded by Baldorossi, that Florence Township is not interested in expanding water and sewer into Mansfield Township at this time.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

AYES: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Lovenduski

NOES: None

ABSENT: None Unanimous approval.

### **Township Engineer**

#### **Tilton Lane, LLC – McHugh Court: Bond Reduction Request**

Engineer Biegen said there are some sidewalks that need to be finished along with some landscaping and there are a couple punchlist items to complete. He recommended reducing the bond.

It was the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Ostrander to approve the request. All ayes. A resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

#### **Old York Road Shared Use Path: Phase II**

Engineer Biegen said bids were received. He recommended going with the lowest bidder, Richard T. Barrett Paving Company, Inc. The bid is still subject to Department of Transportation approval and legal review.

It was the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to award the bid to the lowest bidder. All ayes. A resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

### **Road Program**

Mayor Wilkie said a few months ago he and Council reviewed roads in the township and agreed to what would be included in the 2015 Road Program. Any other roads were added to the 2016 Road Program. There are a lot of roads in town that need to get done. Assistant Administrator Sahol and Engineer Biegen were able to create a map that shows all of the streets that have been paved and the year they were done. It goes back to 1983. Some suggestions to be included are East Second Street in the 300 block section. The section is all spidered. Other streets near it have been done, so if this last block was done, that area would be complete. In Roebling the Riverside Avenue area will be opened by the Environmental Protection Agency.

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There are people parking between Eighth Avenue and Seventh Avenue, even though there are no parking signs. He suggested putting in parking on Riverside Avenue from Eighth Avenue to Seventh Avenue or Sixth Avenue; similar to what was done between Second Avenue and Third Avenue. It would provide a barrier because once the fence comes down, the space is opened up. Another suggestion was fixing the sidewalk and crosswalk at Railroad Avenue and Pond Street. There is a ponding problem on Parish Lane that needs to be addressed. The entrances to the Chestnut Street alleys need repairs. There are sections where the alleys don't run to Broad Street from Chestnut Street and there have been issues for the trash collection trucks getting in and out because of the cars parked there. Council Member Sandusky suggested putting an apron where the truck comes onto the road. That seems to be where all the gulleys are. It seems the water just lays there.

Also included is Cedar Street from Front to Third Streets, and Third Street from Cedar Street to Oak Street. Those are very high travelled areas. Oak Street was done in the late 90's. Third Street wasn't done at that time. Grove Street was done in 1997. The last piece is the old firehouse on West Third Street. West Third Street was already on the list but the apron needs to be addressed.

Council Vice President Ostrander said there was an article in the NJ League of Municipalities magazine regarding microsurfacing. It is done instead of milling and paving. It is a thin layer of asphalt that extends the life of a road another five to eight years. It is a tenth of the cost of repaving. Mayor Wilkie said he and Assistant Administrator Sahol discussed it back in the early 90's. The covering is only as good as the base. It would be a possibility for some of the roads that aren't in bad shape, such as Grove Street or some of the avenues. He agreed it is something the town should try.

The Mayor said Administrator Brook reviewed the numbers and everything looked good. In 2016 the debt drops and depending on how the revenues are, there could be the same amount of funds or more for the Road Project.

It was the MOTION of Woolston, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the Road Program submitted by Engineer Biegen. All ayes.

### **Release Maintenance Bond: Harkins Lane Plaza**

Special Engineer Dan Guzzi provided a report recommending the bond be released. Assistant Administrator Sahol will talk to Engineer Guzzi and provide more information before the next meeting when a Resolution will be prepared for approval.

### **Assistant Township Administrator**

#### **William Guertler, 301 Boulevard; Sidewalk Discussion**

Assistant Administrator Sahol said Mr. Guertler was in attendance to present a concept regarding his sidewalks that he would like Council to consider. He would like to preserve the sidewalk in a way that is similar to what it is today.

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Mr. Guertler said he lives at 301 Boulevard and he was present to discuss his sidewalk and the second phase of the Boulevard repairs. The entire property is important to him and he would like to maintain the originality of the sidewalk. The house was built in 1917. His parents moved in and he is the second generation to live there. The sidewalks are in very good condition but there are three problems to be addressed. There is some minor raising from roots of a tree that was cut down several years ago. There is an area that is a low spot that could possibly have pooling. The final issue is the alignment to the neighbor's sidewalk. He has a solution he would like to propose at his cost. There would be no cost to the township. To correct the drainage and root damage he would like to remove the entire sidewalk and reset the pieces. To correct the misalignment, he proposes moving the sidewalk 10" to 12" toward his house.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said one slab is cracked. Mr. Guertler said it is cracked but not all the way through. He plans to fix it while the other pieces are out. He discussed the alignment and noted his sidewalk is wider than the neighbor's sidewalk and it will not line up perfectly. Assistant Administrator Sahol said the trees would be reinstalled. There were two trees on the property. Assistant Administrator Sahol said it would not be in the town's best interest to install in an area that is so far reduced. In this case, on the Boulevard there is the benefit of the large grassy area between the curb and the sidewalk. A lot of the other areas in town don't have that. When the root mass develops, the sidewalks and curbs are almost immediately impacted. He suggested sliding the sidewalk back and reducing it to four feet (4'). It would provide better growth for the tree and a better outcome.

Mr. Guertler said until two years ago there were large Maple trees in front of his neighbor's property and his own property. The trees dated back to the 1920's. That sidewalk was damaged equally to what his was. He doesn't think the width of the sidewalk would make a difference because the neighbor's sidewalk was not as wide. It didn't happen in a couple years, it took 90 years to become a problem. He would like to keep the five feet (5') width of his sidewalk. He is going to considerable expense to move the sidewalk. He does not want to make it four feet (4') or push it further into the property.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said Council needs to decide if they have the desire to do that. He noted there might not be an answer this evening. The professionals will most likely want the Shade Tree Commission to provide a recommendation. The likelihood of the success of the planting of the trees so as not to impact the infrastructure could be something as simple as moving the sidewalk and reducing the width. Mr. Guertler said if the sidewalk is pushed over and lined up, it is going to interfere with a telephone pole. Assistant Administrator Sahol does not think it will impact the pole.

Council Member Sandusky inquired as to what the timetable would be for the work if the proposal was approved. He wanted to know if it would be done before the work the township is doing was done. Mr. Guertler said Engineer Biegen wanted him to do the work after the road was done, but he would like to do it before.

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Engineer Biegen would like the work to be done after so it does not alter any of the work the township was going to do. Mr. Guertler said he can do his work before the township work and would be able to use the elevations the township planned to use.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said hopefully the project would be going out to bid during the winter so that potentially the work could start late March or April. Mr. Guertler said that was fine, but he was asked if he was going to start the work years out, and his answer was no, he wanted to do the work before the township work was started.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said it needs to be figured out through the professionals where the responsibilities and liabilities fall. If somewhere along the line Mr. Guertler's repairs began to fail and something started to go wrong, would he correct it or would the town be obligated to make repairs, which it is. The township could not force Mr. Guertler to fix safety or drainage issues that may occur. The town may be obligated to go in and make corrections and it may be what Mr. Guertler wanted. There would be an internal discussion if Mr. Geurtler's plan was approved.

Council President Lovenduski asked about what would happen 25 or 50 years later. Would it become the township's sidewalk? Assistant Administrator Sahol said it is the town's sidewalk regardless of what takes place. The township would be taking whatever workmanship that is performed and taking it on as its own. The town would be responsible for it.

Mr. Geurtler said he understood. In the past he has repaired his sidewalks. He used to maintain the tree that was there. Mayor Wilkie asked if his family were the only ones to ever own the house? He said his grandfather was the first owner of the house. At the time his grandfather, Major Mathis, could not afford the house. At the time the price was \$1500.00. He was the principal of schools and a prominent person in the community. The factory "powers that be" wanted a prominent person in that house and they really pushed him to buy it. At the time the Boulevard was "THE" place to live.

Mayor Wilkie said Third Street next to Mr. Guertler hasn't been paved since the early 90's. There is no sidewalk on Mr. Guertler's side and he is not sure if there is one on the other side. When the road becomes part of the Road Program a sidewalk would be installed. It could probably be done adjacent to the curb so it doesn't go too far into Mr. Guertler's property. Mayor Wilkie said the sidewalk will be installed in the future. Mr. Guertler understood.

Assistant Administrator Sahol asked that Mr. Guertler give Council the opportunity to direct the professionals to review the proposal and provide an answer. Assistant Administrator Sahol said he would provide an answer to Mr. Guertler in writing.

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### **Roebbling Slag Area Update**

Assistant Administrator Sahol said he had e-mailed information to everyone. He said he, Council President Lovendusky, Public Works and Water & Sewer met with EPA at the slag area and walked the entire site. From his perspective it is a jewel of a park. It is a blank slate that is just waiting to be worked for the benefit of the town. It is an unbelievable park. The view is incredible. The river access is unbelievable. The biggest question is when. There were some reservations about allowing people to walk on the grass as it is germinating. The EPA was thinking of a spring opening. The township was thinking much sooner than that. The township made the request and the EPA will take it to upper management for consideration. If it is just a matter of germination, the benefit of access exceeds the idea of certain areas that are not at 100 percent germination. It is already in good shape. At this point the township is waiting to hear from the EPA officials. Council President Lovenduski said the area has great grass coverage. It is going to freeze in a couple weeks and any foot traffic would not impact frozen ground, as far as the grass is concerned. In the spring it will grow and the few individuals that may walk across the grass as opposed to using the walking path won't have an impact on the condition of the area. The area is really big. Standing at the river looking toward Roebbling, there is a lot of space there.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said the decision that Council made to move ahead and work with the EPA to remove the trees and soften the slope was the right thing to do. It was perfect, what was created is something to be proud of. It is an amazing sight.

Council President Lovenduski said there are very few areas on the slope that would be hard to get up or down. There are some spots that are steep but there is no area that needs to be fenced off. Assistant Administrator Sahol said it is similar to the area around Barnegat Light House. There is nothing there that is not safe. The river is accessible for fishing or just enjoying the water view. He is excited to hear from the EPA soon. He thinks the EPA is working toward the same goal.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said the **skylight project** in the hallway was taking longer than expected because there was some wet weather. There were some material delays involved. The material that is being used to adhere the new components to the old roof has to be wet applied and at certain temperatures when there is no moisture. The skylights should be installed by next week. The contractor estimates the interior scaffolding would be removed around December 22. There have been some delays. The contractor has been communicating very well with the township. The materials are on site and ready for installation, they are just waiting for the roof work to be done.

Assistant Administrator Sahol referred to a memo he provided regarding **Rod Wagner** with a company called **Plant Preservation**. Mr. Wagner has done a lot of work for the town in the past. He did work at Veteran's Park, Nykita Field and other locations. Assistant Administrator Sahol asked Mr. Wagner to go to Boulevard and make sure the trees got off to a good start. Mr. Wagner went to Boulevard and did the work and sent an invoice with no charges.

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He said there was no charge and he wanted to see the tree program succeed. It is a good program and there are many very good volunteers and it was his gift to the township. Assistant Administrator Sahol said it was a nice gesture from someone who does not even live in this area. He is one of the only companies that uses chemicals that are safe and appropriate. It is all organic.

Council Member Sandusky suggested sending a thank you letter from Mayor and Council. All agreed. The Township Clerk will follow up.

Assistant Administrator Sahol is putting together a powerpoint presentation for the 2015 Reorganization Meeting. He invited all to let him know if there was anything they would like to see included. Council Member Woolston said he would like to see the new park area included. Assistant Administrator Sahol said he already planned to include the park.

Mayor Wilkie said in October or November there was a class reunion for the first six classes that graduated from Florence, from 1944-1950. The power-point from last year was shown with some updates. The power-point presentations are not one-time things; they continue to be used.

Council Member Sandusky noted that the **Duffy** project should be a big part of the presentation. Assistant Administrator Sahol said it was already included.

Assistant Administrator Sahol reached out to **MEND** to make sure there is communication with the seniors in the community. He spoke to the presidents of the two senior groups. They are interested in having MEND attend their group meetings. The membership is excited about the possibility of living there. Jack Ulmer spoke to Jim Napolitan and Mr. Napolitan came to see Assistant Administrator Sahol to discuss getting information to the seniors.

#### **ABC Transfer: Murphy's Tavern – Discussion**

Clerk Weiler said the application and paperwork were in order. It is ready for transfer at the next meeting.

Council Member Sandusky asked if the taxes are up to date on the property? Clerk Weiler explained she would inquire with the Tax Department; it is not part of the transfer process.

Council Member Sandusky said he would like to see a Certificate of Occupancy issued before the license is issued. Clerk Weiler said the buyer is purchasing the liquor license and the building. The new owner will not be able to occupy the building before he is issued a C. O. Clerk Weiler explained that purchasing the license is separate from purchasing the building. Council Member Sandusky said his understanding is that the license could be transferred but the building could not be occupied until the Building Code Official issued a C.O. Clerk Weiler concurred. It was confirmed that the whole building would need to be approved, not just the bar area. Clerk Weiler noted she will talk to the Building Code Official and review.

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### **Action**

Social Affair Permit – Florence FOP Lodge #210, January 9, 2015  
Fireman's Hall, 6:00pm – 11:00pm

It was the **MOTION** of Ostrander, seconded by Woolston to approve the application. All ayes.

Mayor Wilkie said Administrator Brook asked him to make sure everyone was aware that next week there will be resolution regarding **changes in accepting credit cards for payment**. Roebing Bank and Third Fed Bank did not charge a fee for using a credit card. National Penn is not extending the courtesy starting in January. Sandra Blacker, the township CFO, has been meeting with representatives of the bank. The township would not be able to afford incurring the fees every time there was a credit card transaction. By law, the township has to assume the cost for court transactions. Transactions in other departments will include the fee.

Assistant Administrator Sahol explained there is a merchant services group that is a company that will channel the money to the township. Mayor Wilkie said it a third party operation. Council Member Sandusky said the banks are no longer the friendly hometown banks they once were. The bank that used to be Roebing Savings & Loan probably has the township payroll account and most of the other township accounts. Now they want to charge a fee for credit cards. Mayor Wilkie said there are no other banks that were willing to waive the fee. Roebing Bank always did and Third Fed continued it.

Mayor Wilkie said the **carpet** will be installed next week in the courtroom. Assistant Administrator Sahol said the carpet tile style and damaged sections could be removed and replaced. It is plastic backed, not fiber backed so it doesn't hold moisture.

Mayor Wilkie thanked the township employees for **decorating for the holidays**. The tree lighting went well and everyone seemed to enjoy it. The door decorating contest was very well received also. A number of residents at the event thanked him and the employees for all that they do.

Mayor Wilkie said this Saturday is **Christmas in Roebing**. The Main Street Community Center will be part of the tour and there will be refreshments in the building.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bill Bott, 64 Riverbank Drive, said he thinks the road program needs to include all of Hornberger Avenue.

Mayor Wilkie said it was last done in the early 1990's. Mr. Bott said there are really bad potholes in the seams.



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Mr. Bott said he resigned from the Environmental Commission. At the last meeting he attended there were two gentlemen from Waste Management. There was a letter sent to Waste Management requesting two monitoring stations. The committee also requested Waste Management provide information on complaints they received. Waste Management agreed.

Mr. Bott thanked the Mayor for appointing him to the commission and having confidence in him to serve. He feels it is time to let some new, younger people get involved.

Mr. Bott said he was frustrated with two smells in two areas. People living in the community should not have to put up with not being able to open their windows in the summer time.

Council Member Sandusky thanked him for his service to the community.

Engineer Biegen said the township applied for a grant from the NJ DOT to do work on Hornberger Avenue from Route 130 to Seventh Avenue. Mr. Bott said heavy trucks will further damage the road.

Council Member Sandusky asked what will happen to the wood scaffolding in the Municipal Building once the skylight project is completed? He suggested using it on the Friday property on Potts Mill Road. He thinks the scout programs are eager to get into the building.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said there are some things that have to be dealt with regarding that project and he doesn't want to rush into it.

Council Member Woolston said he would like to see more road work done by the Public Works Department. He would like the department to start hot patching the cracks. He thinks it would prolong the life of the roads.

Assistant Administrator Sahol said the township does have the equipment and someone is trained to do the repairs.

MOTION of Ostrander, seconded by Sandusky to close the public comment. Roll call vote -all ayes.

9:05 PM MOTION by Ostrander; seconded by Woolston to adjourn. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

9:05 PM: Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

JOY M. WEILER, RMC/MMC

Township Clerk

/aek